MEMOIR

OF

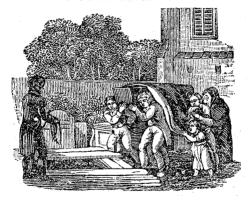
JOHN MATHER, JUN.

A SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHOLAR

ATTACHED TO THE BOWERY VILLAGE SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION.

To which are added
THE LIFE AND HAPPY DEATH OF

ROSETTA EDGAR.

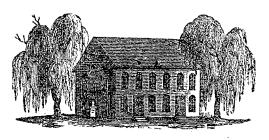


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MEMOIR OF JOHN MATHER, JUN.

JOHN MATHER, Jr., was the son of John and Frances Mather. His father was a native of Scotland, but has resided in New-York for more than thirty years. John was early instructed by his mother in the important concerns of religion. "She taught her dear and only son to lisp his prayers when an infant; she often prayed with him and for him." He who answers prayer no doubt answered the many petitions offered up, for it might be truly said of John that he feared the Lord from his youth. If at any time he had done wrong, when reproved by his parents, he would acknowledge his faults, and not rest satisfied until he knew they were reconfiled to him.

When about eight years old he commenced as a Sabbath scholar in the school attached to the Bowery, Village Church, his mother having been a member of the Methodist Church for the last twenty-eight years. Of his love of the Sabbath school, and of his behaviour while there, we have the following testimonial from his teacher and superintendent:—

" His conduct and demeanour at that time I remember perfectly well; always exemplary: so that if there was need of reproof, (and I do not now recollect any instance,) a word would have been sufficient. He possessed a tender, affectionate disposition. There was a manly seriousness and modesty which he always evinced: although he mingled with the other scholars in boyish plays, yet it was always with moderation. I might say here, (and my testimony would be borne out by all,) that of all those he associated with he had not an enemy. resigned my class into the hands of Mr. Stephenson, who can give the same testimony of his character; and the parents of John informed me how highly esteemed his teacher was by him, and how grieved he was when he left the school. At Mr. Stephenson's resignation the class passed into the hands of Mr. C. Davis. I still noticed our little scholar with pleasure, always at the head of the first class, punctual and in his place. Often when I was grieved and tempted almost to despair of doing any good, on witnessing the bad behaviour and obstinacy of some, I have turned with satisfaction to John Mather, and have observed to his faithful teacher the great hopes I had of him, and that he would make, if spared, a useful member of society, and a bless

ing to those around him. His teacher expressed himself in the same terms of approbation, and mentioned several instances of his desire of reli-

gious knowledge.

" His parents intending to remove on the first of May to such a distance as would render it impracticable for their son to continue any longer, he applied to me for his certificate of dismission. I could not but notice the eagerness which he manifested for it; and while several have gone from us without giving any notice, thus seemingly regardless of their teachers, it was not so with John. Several times did he say to me, 'Mr. Floy, is not my certificate ready yet? We accordingly had it made out, and dismissed him from school with our prayers for his future success and happiness, committing him to Him who 'carries the lambs in his bosom.' Ah! little did we think how soon after he was to be removed from this world! But he is gone! If one who had the greatest affection for him might be permitted here to add a word, I would say, as regards myself, I know not how it was, but I always felt a peculiar interest in John's welfare. Although I knew his faithful teacher had from Sabbath to Sabbath instructed him in the principles of religion, yet at my presenting him with the certificate I felt as it were pressed in spirit, and endeavoured to give him what religious advice I could. But even this did not satisfy me. was impressed on my mind that I had not done enough, and I resolved on the Sunday following, which was the last in the month, to speak closely to him. His being detained from school prevented me from so doing."

The particulars of his last illness and death are gathered from the account given by his parents, and from the visits of his teachers. His disease was the lockjaw, occasioned by wound received in his foot from a nail. He had not quite attained his eleventh year when, in the providence of God, he was taken away by one of the most painful of all those diseases which are "waiting round to hurry mortals home." The wound healing over, no serious apprehensions were entertained until Monday, May 12, when he complained of a stiffness in his neck, and pain in the back; and told his parents he thought he should have the lockjaw. His predictions proved but too true; for very soon after he was seized with that disease, with symptoms showing that he was past recovery. The distress of his parents may be better felt than described. They had before this entertained not the least doubt of his recovery, but they now saw all their hopes gone.

From Monday this dear boy seemed to have a presentiment that he should not live. He spoke to his father, and told him he was going to leave him. His grandmother paying a visit to the family, he said, "Grandmother, you have come to see me die: you did not think I was going so soon."

Tuesday, May 13th, he continued growing worse. He said to his mother, "Mother, will

you not pray for me; I am going to die." "O no," said his mother, "I hope you will not die." "Yes," said he, "I know I shall die;" and then repeated his request. His mother then prayed with him, which seemed to comfort him much. He seemed uneasy that he could not, on account of his pain, kneel down and pray. When told that if he lifted up his heart to God just as he was, the Lord would hear him; "I do," said he, "I endeavour to pray all the time." He told the female superintendent of the school that he had experienced a great change, and he knew that God had forgiven him all his sins and he was prepared to die. When asked if he would rather die than live, he said he would rather die, only for his parents' sake he would prefer to live. He kissed all his little sisters and bade them an affectionate adieu.

On Wednesday, May 14th, I received as soon as I came from out of town the first intelligence that he was very low. He had sent for me several times through the course of the day; for, as he expressed it, he "wanted to see me before he died." I called on brother Davis, who had been to see him that day. When I saw the dear boy labouring under the last symptoms of that dire disease, the lockjaw, his face pale and emaciated, his weeping mother at his bedside, I felt emotions which I cannot describe, and which I shall never forget. Yet I could perceive, though a "mortal paleness was on his cheeks," that "glory was in his soul." He had throughout the day been talking, as I

was informed, in a beautiful manner, of God and religion, which, considering his age, surprised all who heard him. Approaching him I said, "Do you know me, John?" "My superintendent," said he. I said it was the first time I had heard of his illness, or I should have been there before. You look very low. Do you think you will die? He answered he thought he should, Are you prepared to die? He answered, "Yes." I again asked, "On whom do you place your hopes of salvation?" Labouring under great pain, he feebly, though distinctly and promptly answered, "Jesus Christ;" that name which he had so often heard from the lips of his teachers. and which was now precious to him. Soon after he had several very distressing turns, his little bosom heaving and labouring under convulsions which were evidently fast dissolving his mortal frame; but he bore all with patience and resignation. His prayer continually was, "Lord, thy will be done—not mine;" and, as his mother informed me, he had repeated these words several times during the day. Inquiring for his father, he came in. John seemed desirous of speaking something to him, but could not on account of his extreme pain and suffering. His father kissed him, held him by the hand, but said not a word for grief. Presently the dear boy, casting a tender look at him, and making another effort said, "I must go home." The thoughts of parting with him seemed almost to overpower the feelings of his tender parents. Dur. ing the interval between the convulsions, which

were growing more and more violent, so that it is impossible to tell what agonies he underwent, we perceived the little sufferer making an effort to say something, which we could not hear distinctly, his teeth being closed together. On inquiry, his mother, who kept constantly by him, said he had been praying. We took our leave of him, which proved to be our last farewell, and promised to meet him in heaven. He continued in this calm, resigned state even till death. After our departure he several times inquired for us. " Where is my superintendent? Where is Mr. Davis? O how I love my superintendent and my teacher! I love all my teachers, and I love all mankind." He told his parents he should soon be in heaven, and exhorted them to meet him there, and at half past three he quietly

"Lean'd his head on Jesus' breast, And breathed his life out sweetly there."

We trust he is now in that blessed place where there shall be no more pains or convulsions to tear the animal frame; where the inhabitants never say "they are sick, and where all tears are wiped away from their eyes."

His funeral was attended on Friday by many sympathizing friends; and, although the house is some distance from town, many of his school mates were present. When addressed by the clergyman who attended on the occasion, the impression made upon them was such that many sobbed aloud. God grant that they may never lose those impressions! I could hear many of

the children's voices mingling with the rest, while the following beautiful hymn of Mr. Samuel Wesley was sung:—

The morning flowers display their sweets And gay their silken leaves unfold, As areless of the noontide heats, As fearless of the evening cold.

Nipp'd by the wind's untimely blast, Parch'd by the sun's directer ray, The momentary glories waste, The short-lived beauties die away.

So blooms the human face divine, When youth its pride of beauty shows: Fairer than spring the colours shine, And sweeter than the virgin rose.

Or worn by slowly rolling years, Or broke by sickness in a day, The fading glory disappears, The short-lived beauties die away.

Yet these, new rising from the tomb, With lustre brighter far shall shine, Revive with ever during bloom, Safe from diseases and decline.

Let sickness blast, let death devour, If heaven must recompense our pains: Perish the grass, and fade the flower, If firm the word of God remains.

After prayer the procession moved to the "house appointed for all the living," where the mortal remains of our dear little friend now sleep. His happy spirit is now with God in heaven. That his parents, teachers, and school mates may all meet him there is the prayer of his unworthy superintendent, M. Floy, Jr.

New-York, May 18, 1834.

MEMOIR OF ROSETTA EDGAR,

A Member of the Adult African Sabbath School of the M. E. Church, New York.

To the Superintendent of the African Adult Sabbath School, No. 2.

SIR,—It becomes my duty at this time to notice the death of one of the scholars connected with this Sabbath school.

Rosetta Edgar died March 1, 1834, at the nouse of James Burton, her long esteemed friend and faithful class-leader. Her disease was the consumption, from which she suffered for nearly three years. I learn that while under the care of her parents she was not only taught to love and fear God, but also early instructed in the rudiments of an English education. These great and inestimable blessings were improved by her in such a manner, that they resulted in happiness to herself, honour to her parents, and peace in the hour of death.

Rosetta was associated with the first scholars that composed this school; and as her teacher for many months past, I can now speak of her with pleasure. As a scholar, she was punctual, attentive, and intelligent; as a Christian, consistent, spiritual, and humble. Experience in the school of Christ for sixteen years had taught

her stability of character, and that duty, not feeling, should be the Christian's motto.

True, like many others she could say, "I need not attend the Sabbath school to learn to read," yet she remembered other weighty reasons as inducements: such as her example to others. her influence upon associates, and also her own spiritual improvement. She believed that God was with us, and wished to share his blessings. These motives stimulated her to assemble with the school when declining health almost forbade it: and indeed her seat was not vacant until illness of a distressing nature confined her at home. Then, although detained from the people of God, his peace did not forsake her. She could say, "His will be done;" and while this earthly house of her tabernacle was dissolving, she felt assured that she had a home in heaven.

Through the many weeks of her confinement she experienced that peace of mind which passes understanding. Then did she know how to value that gospel the Sabbath school would humbly endeavour to recommend. From it she had derived contentment in health, resignation and joy in sickness, and now was anticipating glory after death. I saw her a short time before her departure. All was peace. God was gracious, faith in lively exercise, and paradise just before her. She had endeavoured to live the life of a Christian for many years, and God was near when affliction and death assailed her. She remembered how often she had accompanied her superintendents and teach-

ers in singing the doxology, and now expected soon to sing it in glory, where she hoped to meet us all, from sorrow and sickness for ever free. Her spiritual consolations continued till the end. The tempter had little power over her. Reason held its sway, and grace triumphed. Thus she was blessed while nature was gradually sinking, till God said, "It is enough; thy sufferings shall terminate, and glory be thy reward." Then with a placid smile she said to her friends, "Adieu,—meet me in heaven," and sweetly fell asleep in Jesus. May this be the portion of her teacher, and all connected with this Sabbath school.

Respectfully, MARY ANN FARNAM. New-York, May 29, 1834.

REGARD FOR THE SABBATH.

We have often noticed the good effects of Sabbath schools, produced on the minds of the scholars, and with what tenacity they adhered to the good instructions they had received, long after their seats had been vacated by their removal to other places. A female scholar left her school, and went to reside with a man who kept his shop open on the Sabbath. She noticed the sin of his conduct, and told him she could not conscientiously live with a man who sold goods on the Lord's day. As she was a faithful girl, her master and mistress were unwilling to part with her, and they concluded to shut their

doors on the Sabbath. Soon after which an altar of prayer was erected in the family, and all three attended the same church. When we see such results from the humble Sabbath school, who will hesitate to recommend it as a powerful engine in the spread of truth? What teacher will be discouraged at the little effects produced by his labours, when he reflects that the seeds of truth, sown in tears of faithfulness, are never lost; that "grace insures a crop?" Be encouraged to renew your exertions, and faint not; and He, under whose banner you fight, will give you victory.

WELCOME TO DEATH.

Welcome the sweet, the sacred hour,— Ye moments, swiftly roll, When earth shall yield her boasted power

When earth shall yield her boasted power To bind my parting soul.

Welcome the pang that calls me home
To scenes of long sought rest;
Welcome the voice that whispers, "Come

To Jesus' pitying breast."

There grief her murmurs shall forego,

And sin its power resign;
Pure joy and love unruffled flow,
And God be ever mine.

O could I now those joys foresee
That soon shall be my own,

When, freed from sin, from sorrow free,
I'm fill'd with God alone;

Death's lonely vale should echo wide With songs of sin forgiven;

Till, wasted safe o'er Jordan's tide.
I join the notes of heaven!